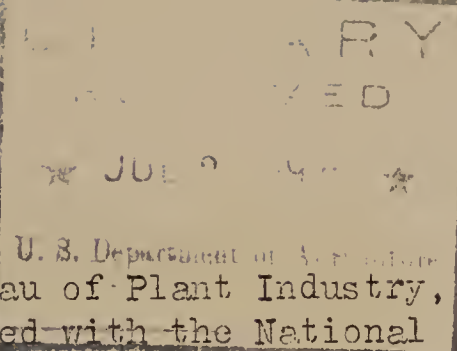


Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

1.9
P69 Ra

THE GARDEN CALENDAR.



A radio talk by W. R. Beattie, horticulturist, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered through WRC and 34 other radio stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, July 8, 1930.

Last week I gave you a few impressions gained during a visit to the splendid fruit and truck farms of southern New Jersey. Today, I want to tell you about a short trip I made through northern Virginia, central Maryland, and southern Pennsylvania.

I traveled by automobile, starting from the old town of Georgetown, now a part of Washington, crossing the Potomac River over the Key Bridge, named in honor of Francis Scott Key, Author of the Star Spangled Banner. On the Virginia side of the river, I turned to the right following the Lee Highway over the rolling hills of old Virginia, past the scene of the Battle of Bull Run, and to the historic town of Warrenton. The region around Warrenton is noted for its many splendid old farmsteads, its bluegrass pastures, and streams of clear, running water. It is a livestock country and noted for the production of many excellent horses. From Warrenton my trip lay through the famous Virginia apple section to Winchester, which claims the distinction of having the largest cider mill and vinegar factory in the world.

That part of Virginia through which I motored that day is noted as a dairy and livestock country. Corn, wheat, and hay are its main crops. All along the route are wonderful fields of wheat that were being harvested and placed in the shocks. Herds of dairy and beef cattle had sought the shady places or were cooling their feet in the shallow streams, for the day was one of the hottest of the season.

My travel was in quest of gardens, farm gardens, town gardens, all kinds of gardens. I wanted to see who had gardens, and what was being grown in them. I wanted to talk to the people who plant and care for the gardens, and learn the value of the gardens to the families. I wanted to see if the people who tend the gardens know how to raise good crops in competition with the many insects and diseases that now-a-days seek to destroy every crop.

I found gardens, hundreds of them, large farm gardens, small town or backyard gardens. There were gardens on the large estates, and around the homes of laborers; owners' gardens, and tenants' gardens, but everywhere the gardens.

I was interested in observing the crops grown in the gardens. There were corn, potatoes, tomatoes, onions, cabbage, radishes, beets, carrots, lettuce, Lima beans, snap beans, peas, cucumbers, squashes, in fact, about everything you could mention in the way of vegetables, also flowers and small fruits. It certainly did not look as though those Virginia people had overlooked anything, and the value that they placed upon their gardens ranged all the way from \$50 to \$300 a year.

(over)

The gardens of the section I visited are mainly of the old style kitchen garden type; picket fences, narrow walks, small compact beds of vegetables, and the work being done mostly by hand. I found that the women are most interested in the garden and that they usually refer to the garden as "my garden."

I did not find many farmers to whom I could talk, all were too busy to even notice a stranger. Mid afternoon, however, brought a thunderstorm which silenced the wheat harvesting machinery and sent the harvesters scurrying to shelter. While the rain was still falling, I was able to question several of those who admitted that they had a fair garden despite the dry weather they had been having. Three out of every four of those questioned about their problems quoted the county agricultural agent as their authority. I asked one man if he was able to control the Mexican bean beetle and he replied that Mr. Lintner, County Agent in the adjoining county, had given him the latest method of control, then he hastened to explain that there is no county agent in the county in which he is now living, but the agent in the adjoining county had been very good about giving advice.

While I was talking to one man, three of his sons came forward, two boys almost fully grown, and the third about 10 or 11 years old. One of the boys said that he had learned how to care for a garden in his club work last year, but that there was no club work being conducted in the neighborhood where he now lives. I told him about the great gathering of the Club Boys and Girls in Washington recently, and the boy said that he was eligible to go to Blacksburg to the State Club Camp last year, but could not afford to take the trip. Why didn't somebody pay that boy's expenses to the State Club camp last year? Somebody missed a real opportunity.

At a small town near Frederick, Maryland, I asked the garage man where I could find the best gardens in that section, and he directed me to the home of the pastor of the local church. I wish you could see that garden with its setting of trees and flowers, and the most wonderful crops of vegetables. I chatted with the owner of the garden and his splendid wife, and if that man can preach as well as he gardens he must be a great inspiration to his followers.

At the opposite end of this small town, I found a retired farmer who had a wonderful garden on his home lot with his broad acres of corn and wheat extending almost as far as you could see. Adjoining his home lived the man who is working the farm and here was another wonderful garden. Those people know how to live well regardless of how far they are from a store or market.

I went hunting gardens, but found more than gardens, and perhaps I may continue the story in next week's garden calendar.